

# Two Letters 3

FROM

M<sup>R.</sup> MONTAGU

TO THE

Lord Treasurer ;

One of the 11th. the other of the 18th. of Jan. 1671.

Which was Read in the

HOUSE of COMMONS.

Together with the

Lord Treasurer's *Speech* in the *House of Peers*, upon  
an Impeachment of High Treason, &c. brought up  
against his Lordship by the *House of Commons*, De-  
cember 23. 1678.

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## Mr. MONTAGU's First LETTER.

PARIS, Jan. 11. 1678.

My Lord,



Have not had the Honour of any from your Lordship, in Answer to all those, wherein I gave you the best account I could of matters here, by the Express I sent. Nor indeed could I expect his Majestie could take any sudden resolution in matters of so great moment.

The occasion of my giving you this trouble, is, to give you the best light I can into the reason of Mr. *de Ruigny's* Sons journey into England, who will be there perhaps as soon as this letter. If his Father's age would have permitted it, I believe they would have sent him; so they have chosen the Son, who is to make use of lights his Father will give him, and by the near relation he hath to my Lady *Vanghan*, who is his Cousin-German, and the particular friendship which Father and Son have with Mr. *William Russell*, he is to be introduced into a great commerce with the malecontent Members of Parliament, and insinuate what they shall think fit to cross your measures at Court, if they shall prove disagreeable here: whilst Mr. *Barilla* goes on in his smooth civil way.

I thought it my duty to his Majestie, to give your Lordship this account, though I have not explained this matter so much in my letter to the Secretary; wherefore I hope you will let this be seen by none but his Majesty. What I know farther of this, or any thing else, you shall always be acquainted with. They are here in great pain, till it be known what will become of the Parliament, and do not stick to say, if that be put off for a month, they doubt not of a Peace. I am with all respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most obedient and humble Servant,

R. Montagu.

## Mr. MONTAGU's Second Letter.

PARIS, Jan. 18. 1678.

My Lord,

Since I sealed up my letter, by my Lord *Dunblaw* I have had one with me that is very exactly as can be, informed of most things here, and has told me the reason of *Ruigny's* Journey.



His chief Errand is, to let the King know, that the King of *France* did hope he was so firm to him, as not to be led away by the Grand Treasurers who was an ambitious man, and, to keep himself well with the people, would gratifie their inclinations by leading his Master unto an unreasonable War against *France*. That as for money, if he wanted it, he should have what he would from hence.

His instructions are, if this does not take, by the means of *Will. Russel*, and other discontented people, to give a great deal of money, and cross all your measures at Court.

When he gives you his Fathers letter of recommendation, you cannot chuse but be very kind to him, since the chief part of his journey is to do you so good offices. My Lord, if I might be worthy to give my advice, who see things upon the place, there could be nothing better done, then after he hath been two days in *England*, for the King to give you order to tell Monsieur *Barillon*, that he knows *Ruvigny* hath a relation and commerce with people ill affected to the Government; and would be therefore glad to have him retire. You cannot imagine how it would damp them here, when they shall see their little tricks do not pass upon us.

And old *Ruvigny*, that values himself upon knowing *England*, and having saved so much money as he had (by what I told you formerly) order to give, hath given it them for a maxim, That they must diminish your credit before they can do any good in *England*. But since their chief quarrel to you is, the being so true to your Masters interest, I am sure he is too just to let them do you any hurt.

If the King is for a War, you know what to do; if he hearkens to their money, be pleased to let me know what they offer, and I dare answer, to get our Master, as much again: for *Barillon's* orders are to make the market as low as he can. I am, &c.

*R. Montagu.*

*The Lord Treasurers SPEECH in the House of Peers, upon an Impeachment of High Treason, &c. brought up against his Lordship by the House of Commons, Dec. 23. 1678.*

*My Lords,*

I Hope you will not enter upon any other business before you have given that liberty to me, which is the priviledge of every Peer, to be heard upon

any accusation that is brought against him, though of far less moment than what hath been newly read against my self.

I confess I should have heard this charge with horror, if the matter of it had been true; but I thank God, I know my innocency to be so great, that it protects me from all sort of fear, but that of lying under so black a Character: as may be believed by those that cannot hear my defence; though I have the confidence to think that it is not truly believed in the hearts of the greatest part of those that have been informed against me.

I must needs confess that I thought my self the last man in this Kingdom that should ever have been in danger of being accused for Treason, because I know no man that abhors it more, and that would pursue it more vigorously than my self, against any that should be guilty of it. Nay to such a degree is my detestation of that crime, that were I sure the dearest Child have were guilty of it, I would willingly be his Executioner.

My Lords, I know this is not the time for me to enter regularly upon my defence, because I know your Lordships will first order me a Copy of the Charge, and appoint me a time for my vindication; when I doubt not but to do it to the full satisfaction of your Lordships and of all the World. In the meantime I will only beg leave to observe to your Lordships, that the Articles in this Charge which can seem to have any thing of Treason in them have their answer so obvious, that there is very little in them which may not be answered by many others as well as my self, and some of them by every man in the Kingdom.

The first, which is the assuming Regal Power I confess I do not understand; having never in my life done any thing of great moment, either at home, or relating to Foreign matters, for which I have not always had His Majesties Command. And although I am far from having been the most cautious man in taking care for my own security, (which perhaps my great innocence hath been the cause of) yet I have not been so wanting of common prudence, as in the most material Things not to have had His Majesties Orders and directions under His own Hand, and particularly for the letters now made use of against me.

The second I think doth scarce need my giving any answer to; it being so obvious, that the Army was no more raised by me, than by every Lord of this house: And whoever is in that Station which I hold, must certainly be a Fool, to desire any thing which creates a want of money, especially so great as mine, as the Charge of an Army must necessarily and immediately produce. And for our part of the Article concerning the Pay-master of the Army,



is in fact otherwise ; for security from the Pay-master has been taken in the sum of four hundred thousand pounds.

The third is of the same nature with the first, and comes from the same foundation, which is, what a Gentleman hath thought fit to produce to the House of Commons. *I* will not now censure his action, *I* think it will do enough for its self ; *I* will onely say, that although *I* take it for one of the greatest misfortunes which can befall a man, to lie under such a charge of the House of commons, yet *I* would much sooner choose to be under that unhappiness, than under his circumstances.

The fourth Article is not onely false in every part of it, but it is not possible to believe it true, without my being the greatest fool on Earth, as well as the blackest Villain. For were *I* capable of such a wickedness, yet the more wicked any man is, the more he is carried to his own interest ; and is it possible any thing under Heaven can agree less with my interest, than the destruction of this King ? Can *I* possibly hope to be better than *I* am ? and is it not apparent, that there is not one man living, whose happiness depends so much as mine upon the preservation of his Person ?

My Lords, *I* know there is not a man in the world, that can in his heart think me guilty of that part of the Article, if *I* should say nothing to it. But besides, *I* was so far from concealing this hellish Plot, that it is notoriously known, His Majesty sent me the first notice of it, together with forty three heads of the information, before *I* knew a syllable of it from any body else. And it hath been own'd at the Bar of the House of Commons by him, ( from whom onely *I* had the Intelligence ) that he had all the encouragement & dispatch from me that *I* could give him. Besides, when it was disclosed to the Council Board, he told some of the Clerks of the Council, ( as he had done me divers times before ) that it would have been much better, and more would have been discovered, if it had been longer kept private. Besides this, *I* had the fortune to be particularly instrumental in seizing Mr. Coleman's papers, without which care, there had not one of them appear'd, and consequently the best and most material Evidence which is yet of the Plot, had been wholly wanting. And certainly this is the first time that any man was accus'd to be the concealer of that Plot, whereof he hath been a principal means of procuring the discovery.

For that part of the Article that says, *I* am Popishly affect'd, *I* thank God, that the contrary is so known to all the world, that even some of those that Voted against me, did own their knowledge of the falsity of that allegation ; and *I* hope *I* have through my whole life given so good

testimony of my Religion, both in my own Family, and by my Services to the Church, ( whenever it hath lain in my power ) that I shall not need much vindication in that particular : and I hope your Lordships will forgive me my weakness, in telling you, that I have a yonger Son in the House of Commons, whom I shall love the better so long as I live, for moving to have that part of the Article to stand against me, that by that patern it might appear, with what sort of zeal the whole hath been carried to my prejudice.

The fifth Article will, upon examination, appear to be as ill ground as any of the rest; and I am sorry I am able to give one reason, which is, that I have known no Treasure in my time to waste, having entred upon an empty Treasury, and never seen one farthing given to His Majesty ( in almost six years ) that hath not been appropriated to particular uses, and strictly so applied by me, as the Acts have directed. And there hath been one of those Aids which, in stead of giving the King Money, hath not cost him more out of his own Purse, to the same uses, as doth appear by the larger dimensions of the new Ships, and so in other things: in much that I take upon me the vanity to say, that by the payments I have made to the Navy and Seamen, beyond former times; the paying off the greatest part of the Debt which was stopt in the Exchequer before my time by my own punctuality in the course of payments, and by other things which I am able to shew, I doubt not but to appear meritorious in stead of being Criminal upon that Article.

As to the sixth Article, which mentions my great Getting, I cannot deny but that I serve a Master, whose goodness & Bounty hath been a great deal more to me than I have deserved, and to whom I can never pay Gratitude enough by all the Services of my life. But when the particulars of the gettings shall appear, it will be found very contrary to what is suggested abroad; and that in near six years time in this Great place, I have got half that, which many others have got in lesser places in half that time. And from the examination of this, which I desire may be seen, there will arise matter to accuse my prudence in not having done for my Family what justly I might, but nothing to arraign either my honour, my conscience, or my faithfull Service to the Crown.

My Lords, if my obedience to the King shall not be my crime, I think nothing else will stick upon me from these Articles: For my own heart flattens me to believe that I have done nothing but as a true Protestant, and a faithful servant both to my King and Countrey. Nay I am as confident, that now I speak, that had I either been a Papist or friend to the French,



had not been now accused. For I have reason to believe that the principal informer of the House of Commons hath been assisted by *French* advice to this accusation; and if the Gentleman were as just to produce all he knows for me, as he hath been malicious to shew what may be lyable to misconstruction against me, or rather against the King (as indeed it is) no man could Vindicate me more than himself. Under whose hand I have to shew, how great an Enemy to *France* I am thought, how much I might have had to have been otherwise, and what he himself might have had for getting me to take it. But I do not wonder this Gentleman will do me no right, when he does not think fit to do it to his Majestie (upon whom chiefly this matter must reflect.) Although he knows, as will appear under his hand, that the greatest invitations to his Majestie for having money from *France*, have been made by himself; that if his Majestie would have been tempted for money, he might have sold Towns for as much as if they had been his own, and the money have been conveyed as privately as he pleased: That his Majestie might have made matches with *France* if he would have consented to give them Towns; and yet, that the King hath always scorned to yield the meanest village, that was not agreed to by the *Spaniard* and *Hollander*. That Gentleman hath often pretended how much his own interest in *France* was diminished, only by being thought my friend. And besides diverse other instances I have under his hand to shew the malice of the *French* Court against me, I sent two of his Letters to the House of Commons, which shew how Mounseur *Ruvigny* was sent hither on purpose to ruine me; which I am well assured at this time they would rather see, than of any one man in *England*. Besides what that Gentleman could say of this kind, (if he pleased) I hope his Majestie will give me leave (in my defence) to say in his presence and in the hearing of diverse Lords, with whom I have the honour to sit in the Committee of Foreign Affairs, that, which were it not true, his Majesty must think me the impudentest and worst of men to affirm before him, that ever since I had the Honour to serve his Majesty to this day, I have delivered it as my constant opinion, that *France* was the worst interest his Majesty could embrace, and that they were the Nation in the World from whom I did believe, he ought to apprehend the greatest danger; and who have both his Person and Government under the last degree of contempt. For which reason alone (were there no other) I would never advise his Majesty to trust to their friendship.

My Lords, tis my great happiness, that your Lordships are my Judges: whose wisdom and Justice are so great, that you will both discern the truth in the Evidence when it shall come before you, and in the mean time distinguish

guish truly, what the crimes are (if they could be proved) and not what they are called. For this reason this house hath wisely provided to have special matter before them, to the end they be satisfied whether the charge have its right denomination; for otherwise it were to no purpose to discuss special matter unless it were to see whether the special matter alleaged what it is called. As for example, if a man were accused for having Traiterously passed the River in a pair of Oars, this is special matter, and called Treason by inserting the word Traiterously; yet your Lordships would not therefore proceed as taking it for Treason. So in this case I beg of your Lordships shew as well as my own, that you will please to use that discretion which will be necessary for all your Lordships safety and seats in this House: For I beseech your Lordships to consider, whither such a precedent may go hereafter? What the House of Commons may do in such a case there is no Question but his Majesty may do the same by his Attorney; what either of them may do against one Lord, they may do against many (and we have seen it done in our days against all the Bishops at once.) Is it not very precariously then, that your Lordships hold your seats here, by either of these ways, as many of your Lordships as for a time it might be convenient to remove, should be at the mercy of having a thing called Treason, whether it be so or no.

Truly, my Lords, I have reason to believe that in the House of Commons the matter of my Charge (if proved) was not thought to amount to Treason neither by Statute or Common Law; and I hope your Lordships have had an example in your memory ever to assist the making of Treason by simulation.

I should therefore not only wrong my own innocence, but the right of the Peers, to submit to answer matters of misdemeanors, as a Crime of Treason.

My Lords, I wonder not at the malicious prosecution of those who would have me taken for what they truly are. For I am well assured neither the French take me to be of their interest, nor the Papists to their Religion: But I am troubled to fall under so severe a Censure of the House of Commons, although I cannot blame them, but my accusers have wrongfully so informed them.

My Lords, I will conclude with this comfort, that I do not in the least apprehend the matter of my Charge under the security of your Lordships justice; and will therefore trouble your Lordships no longer at this time, only to pray your Directions, whether I am to withdraw, which I shall readily obey.